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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002479

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON OUTREACH TO IRAQIS ON CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION STANDUP

Classified By: Classified by Charge d'Affaires James Jeffrey for reason

s 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Some Sunnis are digging in to get 25 additional Sunni representatives on the Constitution Committee, although when pressed senior leaders will drop to 20 fairly quickly, including Talabani and Committee Deputy Chair Janabi. Shi'a contacts universally support 15 as a maximum; Barzani appears to be in the Shi'a camp. Next steps: Much of the action will shift to Irbil, where many political figures will attend Barzani's swearing in as KRG President on June 14. The DCM will be present. Charge will continue to press the need to close the deal with additional contacts June 13. As the parliamentary factions have seemingly agreed to the conditions for Sunni inclusion, the only issue is numbers, where the Sunnis maybe trying to create demographic facts, or are raising a demand they know (and some hope) will be rejected, potentially raising UN (and even US) ire toward the Shia-dominated National Assembly.

Sunni Waqf Director

12. (C) Sunni Waqf Director Adnan al-Dulaymi backed down "personally" on his demand for 25 Sunni Arab additions to the Constitution Committee in June 11 meeting with the Charge, but he would not go lower than 20. He said that Sunni Arabs would call for U.N. arbitration if pressured to take accept 15. He said Sunnis would also consider boycotting the process altogether. Dulaymi passed Charge a list of 25 candidates for the committee that appeared to have been written in concert with the Iraqi Islamic Party, but excluded the National Dialogue Council. Dulaymi has prepared a separate list of some 53 individuals he recommended be consulted as experts and advisors but not brought on as voting members. Charge stated that our soundings had indicated that 15 additional Sunnis was as far as the parliament was likely to go; Delaymi lamely argued that the Sunni percent of the population (he claimed 30-40 percent, most objective figures range around 20 percent) and the 42 percent of 'no votes' (sic) in the election required a large Sunni group to represent the unrepresented. Charge urged Dulaymi to rethink his position on numbers and take advantage of the opportunity to participate as equals in this process. Charge stressed that US would go to bat for equal status for new Sunnis, and the right for Sunnis to pick their own candidates, but we would not press for more than 15 Sunni representatives.

TNA Speaker Hassani

13. (C) TNA Speaker Hachim al-Hasani agreed with Charge that 15 additional Sunni Arabs was a reasonable number in a June 11 meeting. Hassani said he would meet with Dulaimi privately later that day to convince him to accept that number.

VP Abd al Mahdi

14. (C) Abd al Mahdi was supportive of the Charge,s presentation. He said as well that 15 additional Sunnis was all the traffic was likely to bear. He said he would back Sunni requests for equal status (the 'consensus' rule for decisions) and the right for the Sunnis to pick their own representatives. He however pushed for a Sunni contact now in Washington, Tahar Jabr Alwani, whom he said is well known to US officials, to be given one of the Sunni slots. Charge made no commitment.

President Talabani

15. (C) In response to the Charge,s presentation, Talabani said that he had pushed for 25 Sunnis, because he wanted representatives from four different groups including 'liberals,' members of the communist party, and others (whom one could describe as 'anti-clerical' Sunnis. (Clearly Talabani wants to water down the nationalist/clerical color of most of the Sunni interlocutors.) When Charge asked if Talabani could deliver the parliament on 25, he backed down immediately. He admitted that even Barzani (who is particularly miffed at the Sunnis right now, according to

Talabani) would not go that far, let alone the Shi'a. He then put forward the possibility of '20' additional Sunni slots. Charge said that 15 appeared to us both as reasonable and as the most that the traffic would bear. Talabani said he would try to work all this in Irbil at the KRG swearing-in, now scheduled for June 14.
National Dialogue Council

16. (C) On June 11, Mahmoud Mashadani did most of the talking with A/Polcouns. He said 25 was the minimum number to represent the Sunni demographic, which was defined by the percentage of non-voters. Fifteen would not be accepted by the Sunni community and would expose anybody who agreed to to great pressure to withdraw from the political process and physical danger. He then added that if Waqf head Dulaymi would publicly agree to 15, this would increase that number,s acceptability, even though Dulaymi, as a government official, was not seen as completely representative if the Sunni community. NDC Salafist representative Abd al Nasir al Janabi claimed that former UN rep to Iraq Jamal Benomar had been in recent contact with him and other members of the Council and had told them that even the Secretary of State had recognized their importance in the community.

PM Jafari

17. (C) Jafari's top political staffer told us June 11 that Jafari strongly believed 15 was the maximum, and urged that we press our contacts on that number. The PM,s office has also confirmed that the Council of Ministers has decided to remove Dulaymi as head of the Sunni Waqf, as well as the head of the Shia Waqf. Although the putative replacement for Dulaymi may have broad support in the Sunni community, we have urged the PM,s office and the Presidency to go slow on making these changes at this delicate political moment.
Jeffrey